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SPAWN



image COMICS PRESENTS:

"PAYBACK"

PART 2



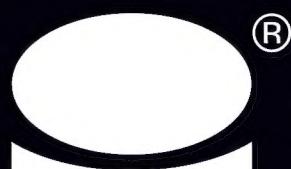
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Dedicated to:
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FOR IMAGE COMICS

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THREE WEEKS AGO, AL SIMMONS RETURNED FROM THE GRAVE, TRICKED-- DECEIVED-- HE NOW LIVES A LIFE HE'D MUCH RATHER NEVER HAVE STARTED. WITH HUNDREDS OF QUESTIONS STILL TO BE ANSWERED, THE ONE THING HE HASN'T BEEN IS COMFORTABLE.

HIS NEW LIFE AND POWERS ARE A MOCKERY, BOTH ARE CRUEL JOKES, PUT INTO PLAY BY A LEGENDARY EVIL. TO USE THOSE POWERS MEANS STEPPING CLOSER TO A SECOND DEATH. HOLDING BACK WILL BUY HIM THE TIME TO ASK ALL HIS QUESTIONS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE FATES AREN'T COOPERATING.

PUSHED INTO BATTLE AGAINST A MAFIA-DIRECTED CYBORG, THE SPAWN AVOIDED USE OF HIS POWER DURING BATTLE. HOWEVER, TWO CRACKED RIBS AND A BROKEN ARM CHANGED THAT. HE CAN ENDURE THE PAIN FROM THE RIBS, BUT THE ARM HAD TO BE FIXED.

MORE WASTED ENERGY.

THERE HAD TO BE A WAY TO STOP IT. THERE WAS! WHILE A GOVERNMENT-PAID ASSASSIN, HE WAS ONE IN A HANDFUL PRIVY TO CERTAIN DETAILS... SUCH AS THE LOCATION OF THE RIGHT HARDWARE TO DROP A CYBORG.

WITH THE LAST SNAP OF A MAGAZINE CLIP FOR AN AK-830 ROCKET LAUNCHER, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THREE WEEKS, FEELS THE WAY HE USED TO WHEN HE WAS STALKING A KILL:

...COMFORTABLE.

U.S. ARMY

VERY, VERY COMFORTABLE.

AND SOMEWHERE IN HELL,
A CHILDLIKE GRIN CROSSES
THE FACE OF EVIL.

THIS
SHOULD
JUST ABOUT
DO IT.

GOT
ENOUGH
FIREPOWER TO
LEVEL A SMALL
BUILDING...
OR A BIG
CYBORG.

LUCKY FOR
ME, HIS EXTERNAL LIFE
SENSORS WENT HAYWIRE
WHEN HIS ARM WAS
DAMAGED. HE THOUGHT I
WAS DEAD. DON'T KNOW
HOW MUCH MORE I
COULD HAVE TAKEN.

THOUGH IF PUSH
CAME TO SHOVE, I
COULD HAVE BLOWN
THE CRAP OUTTA
HIM WITH MY
POWERS.

NOT
NOW!

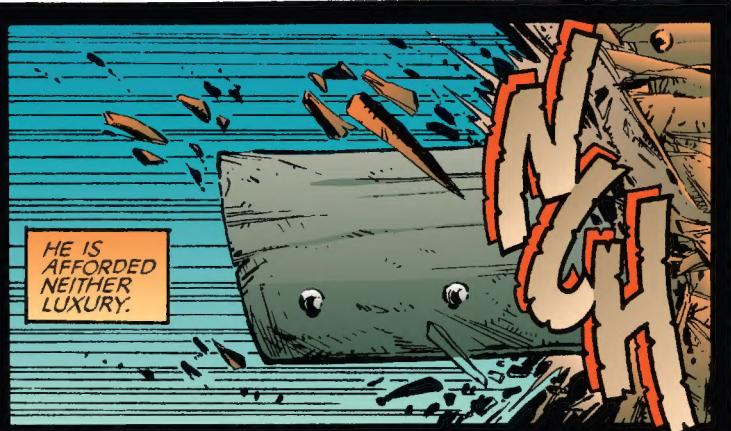
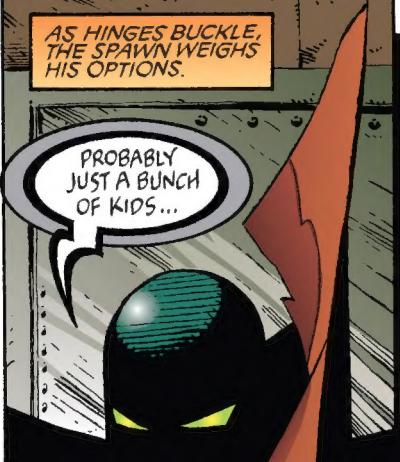
BUMP!

ANOTHER INTRUSION.
ANOTHER DISTRACTION.
YOUR PRESENCE HAS
BEEN DETECTED SOONER
THAN YOU THOUGHT.

THIS IS THE ARMY,
AFTER ALL. THE
COUNTRY'S ELITE. YOU
WERE ONE OF THEM
NOT LONG AGO.

GET
THE
DOOR
RAM!

THE CROW-BAR WEDGED
IN THE DOOR WON'T
KEEP THEM BACK FOR LONG.



THOUGH HE'S PRIMED FOR ACTION, THIS IS NOT THE ACTION HE'S LOOKING FOR. HIS SIGHTS ARE SET ON A SPECIFIC TARGET. UNFORTUNATELY, GETTING TO THAT TARGET INVOLVES ANOTHER DRAIN ON HIS POWERS.



IT DOES,
SORT OF.

HIS MOLECULES ARE RIPPED APART, ONE BY ONE, THEN MESHED TOGETHER WITH THE EXISTING MOLECULAR STRUCTURES PRESENT. THEY ARE THEN VACUUMED-- SUCKED AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT-- TO A PRE-ORDAINED LOCATION...

..THEN, REASSEMBLED AS
FIERCELY AS THEY WERE
SEPARATED.

PUT SIMPLY-- THE SPAWN
ISN'T HAVING FUN YET.

HOLY MOTHER!!

HE MELTS TO THE GROUND
OF A DESERTED ALLEYWAY
IN THE BOWERY, AN AREA
THAT SOMEHOW DRAWS
HIM BACK SINCE HIS
RETURN TO EARTH.

THIS IS HIS NEW HOME.
FULL OF GARBAGE AND
CRAP AND DRUNKS, IT
SERVES A PURPOSE:
THAT OF A CONSTANT.

BESIDES, HE'S
BEGINNING TO
BOND WITH SOME
OF HIS 'NEIGHBORS.'

I THINK
I'M GOING
TO PUKE.

HKKHKHP

AS HE THRASHES,
CRUMPLED ON THE
CRACKED PAVEMENT,
AN ADVANTAGE OF
THIS ARRANGEMENT
BECOMES
APPARENT.

Yo!
RED
MAN!

NEVER FEAR!
BOBBY'S
HERE!

YOU AIN'T
LOOKIN'
SO SOLID.
I SAY TO
MYSELF,
IT'S TIME
FOR GOOD
OL' UNCLE
BOBBY
TO WEAVE
SOME OF
HIS STREET
MAGIC.

hic
oops!

8:
0:
3:
1



CRIES,
KID, YOU'RE
EVEN UGLIER
THAN MY AUNT
MABEL-- AND
SHE WAS
UGLY!!!

C'MON,
BUD, I
WAS ONLY
KIDDING.

IN ANOTHER PART OF NEW YORK,
IN THE BUILDING OWNED BY
MAFIA DON VITO GRAVANO,
NERVES ARE LESS FRAYED.

WE ARE ALL
GRATEFUL FOR YOUR
ASSISTANCE, OVERT-
KILL. BARTINO IS
VERY LUCKY TO HAVE
YOU IN HIS RANKS.

THE DAMAGE YOU SUSTAINED
IS UNFORTUNATE, BUT WE WILL
GLADLY COVER THE COST OF ANY
REPAIRS NECESSARY. YOU MAY
ALSO HAVE MY PRIVATE JET AT
YOUR DISPOSAL, WHENEVER
YOU WISH TO LEAVE FOR
YOUR HOMELAND.

I WILL
LEAVE
WHEN I AM
100% AGAIN.
NOT
BEFORE.

MISTER
BARTINO
WILL NOT
UNDER-
STAND MY
ACCIDENT
...

...THOUGH
MY TARGET
WAS FAR
TOO EASY
A KILL--

-- IT WOULD
NOT DO MY
REPUTATION
ANY GOOD
TO GO HOME
LESS THAN
PERFECT. I
HOPE YOU
UNDER-
STAND?

I DO.

TOO BAD BARTINO
DIDN'T HAVE THE SAME
COMPASSION. IF YOU DON'T
MIND MY ASKING... WHO WILL
YOU WORK FOR WHEN BARTINO
DIES-- HOPEFULLY NOT FOR
MANY YEARS-- BUT SUCH
QUESTIONS NEED TO
BE ASKED.

AND SO IT GOES GRAVANO
TRIES TO SWALLOW UP MORE POWER.
HIS NICKNAME ON THE STREET
IS "DRACULA," BECAUSE
HE LIVES TO SUCK THE
POWER OUT OF EVERYONE.

NOOOOOO

EXPLODING PAIN ENGULFS SPAWN'S SENSES, REBOUNDING IN HIS SKULL, LIKE A SATANIC PINBALL GAME. THEN, ANOTHER FLASHBACK SLASHES ITS WAY TO THE SURFACE.

IT'S A PIECE OF FORGOTTEN PAST TRYING TO TIE TOGETHER THE FINAL CLUES ABOUT HIS DEATH.

HE WAS A SOLDIER, A PATRIOT. HE DID WHAT HIS COUNTRY ASKED AND WAS DECORATED FOR IT. AS A COVERT HIT-MAN, HIS SELECTIVE CONSCIENCE WAS AN ASSET. IT WAS MARRIAGE... THOUGHTS OF FAMILY AND FUTURE... THAT SPROUTED THE SEEDS OF HIS DOOM.

INCREASINGLY, HIS LIFE WAS FILLED WITH DOUBT. THE PERFECT KILLER STARTED ASKING QUESTIONS.

HE FELL OUT OF FAVOR, AND WAS MURDERED.

WHY CAN'T HE RECALL HIS KILLER'S FACE?

WHY IS HE HAUNTED... HOUNDED... BY THIS VISION OF THE GRIM REAPER?

THEN... OUR TRAGIC HERO IS GIVEN A CLUE.

BUT
WHAT DOES IT MEAN!?

SCUM LIKE YOU
MAKE ME SICK!

EVEN IF THEY
HADN'T PAID
ME FOR THIS--

--I'D HAVE
KILLED
YOU FOR
FREE!!!

THERE ISN'T
ANY ROOM FOR
TRAITORS,
SIMMONS!!!
WE'RE AT WAR!!
NO TIME FOR MORONS
OR YOUR SELF-
RIGHTEOUS GRAND-
STANDING! I'M
GLAD THEY FINALLY
DECIDED TO DO
SOMETHING
ABOUT IT.

THEY WERE
SMART ENOUGH TO
GET THE BEST MAN
FOR THE JOB. ONE
WHO CAN STILL
FOLLOW ORDERS!

WHAT DOES
IT MEAN!!

STOPPI!

I'LL SEE YA
IN HELL, BRO.

HEY, BUD!

I SAID
I WAS ONLY
KIDDING
ABOUT YOUR
LOOKS!



PEACEFULNESS.

IT CAN BE SUCH A RARE COMMODITY--

STOP!

DON'T
KILL!!
HIM!!



IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE HER HUSBAND'S DEATH. WANDA BLAKE HAD COME TO TERMS WITH THAT FACT YEARS AGO, BUT IN THE PAST THREE WEEKS, HER SLEEP HAS BEEN SPORATIC AT BEST. SHE CAN'T STOP THINKING OF HIM AND HIS TORTURED SOUL. AND, TRY AS SHE MIGHT TO HIDE IT FROM HER NEW HUSBAND, THESE ARE IMAGES SHE CANNOT ENDURE.

WANDA!
WANDA!
WHAT IS IT?



YOU SEE, MY VERY EXISTENCE IS PUTTING ALL OF YOU IN DANGER. SOMEONE WANTS ME, AND THEY'RE WILLING TO CARVE A PATH THROUGH THESE ALLEYWAYS TO ELIMINATE ME. FOR NOW, THEY THINK I'M DEAD...

...THE PERFECT TIME TO GO ON THE OFFENSIVE. BESIDES, SOMEBODY HAS TO PROTECT OUR TERRITORY. THIS IS OUR HOME, BOBBY.

WE CAN'T LET THEM TAKE ANY MORE.

I CAN'T.

JEEZ! LIGHTEN UP, AL! WE DON'T GOTTA WORRY ABOUT 'EM... WE CAN JUST MOVE. WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME...!

SO PISS ON 'EM, I SAY! LET 'EM HAVE THE STINKIN' GARBAGE! IT AIN'T WORTH FIGHTING FOR.

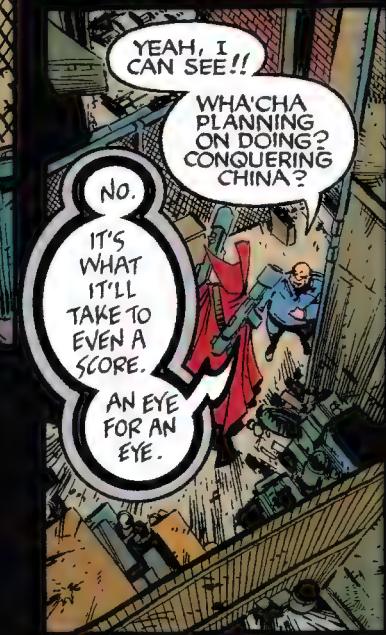
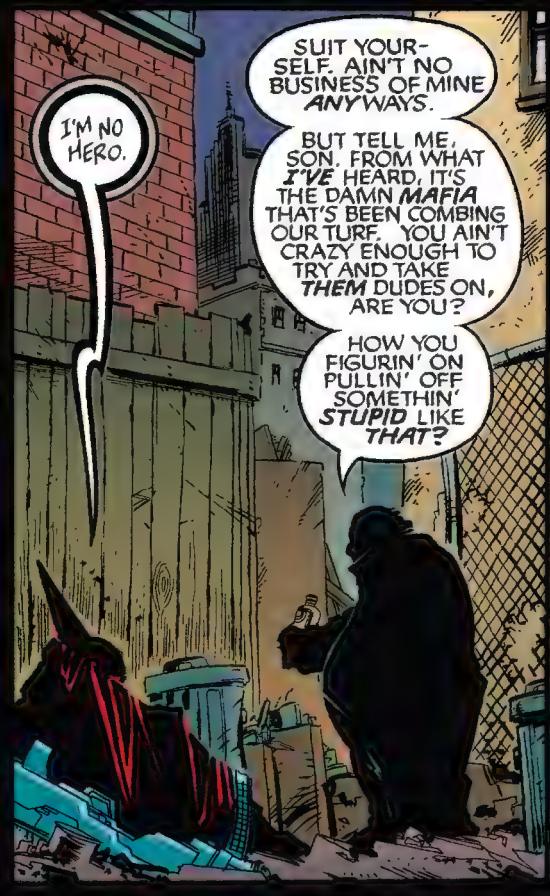
NO. BUT YOU ARE.

THIS'LL BE EASY. I PROMISE.

BESIDES, FRIEND, I WON'T MOVE. THESE ALLEYS ARE OURS... NOW, TOMORROW, AND NEXT WEEK. THEY HAVE NO RIGHT, AND THEY HAVE NO GUTS.

HA-HA!
SO YOU'RE A REGULAR HERO, ARE YOU?

AND HERE I FIGURED YOU WORE THAT GETUP 'CAUSE YOU WERE SOME KIND'A FRUITCAKE...!



THE NEXT MORNING,
AT THE ANIMAL
SHELTER NEAR
WANDA'S HOME...

YOU HEARD
ME RIGHT, MA'AM...
DON'T HAVE ANY-
ONE HERE ON STAFF
WHO FITS YOUR
DESCRIPTION.

SOUNDS
LIKE A
MIGHTY
FINE FELLA,
THOUGH.

...EXCEPT,
OF COURSE, ABOUT
HIM POSING AS AN S.P.C.A.
EMPLOYEE. I CAN'T
APPROVE THAT
PART.

MIGHT HAVE
BEEN FROM ANOTHER
DISTRICT... THOUGH THAT
DON'T EXPLAIN WHY
HE'D KNOW ABOUT
YOUR DOG.

SHE BRUSHED IT OFF AT THE
TIME, BUT WANDA HASN'T
BEEN ABLE TO STOP THINKING
ABOUT THE MAN WHO CAME
CALLING ABOUT HER DOG*...

BESIDES, THERE HAVE BEEN
THOSE RECURRING DREAMS
ABOUT AL...

IN SOME WEIRD WAY, SHE
FEELS HE MIGHT HAVE
KNOWN AL...

HE SEEMED LIKE SUCH
A TROUBLED INDIVIDUAL.
IF NOTHING ELSE, SHE
WANTED TO MAKE SURE
HE WAS OKAY.

NOW SHE KNOWS THE
NICE GENTLEMAN WAS
A FRAUD. BUT WHY?
MAYBE HE WAS CHECKING
UP ON HER HUSBAND?
MARRIAGE TO A C.L.A.
MAN DOES HAVE ITS
PITFALLS.

*SPAWN #3. -- Tom

GO AHEAD!

GET A GOOD
LOOK! BUT I'LL
TELL YA, I'M
MIGHTY PROUD
OF MY EARS!

SURE, I'VE HEARD
ALL THE JOKES.
"YOU LOOK LIKE A
TAXI WITH ITS DOORS
OPEN!" "HEY,
DUMBO!" "HEY,
TROPHY-HEAD!" IF
NOTHING ELSE, THEY
SURE DO BREAK
THE ICE!

Um... oh,
PARDON ME,
I WAS THINKING
OF SOMETHING.
WHAT DID YOU...?

wha
...?!

AFTER TEN MINUTES TALKING
ABOUT EARLOBES AND ROSS
PEROT, WANDA EXCUSES
HERSELF.

I WONDER
IF TERRY'S IN
SOME SORT OF
TROUBLE AT
HIS JOB.

WAS THAT
GUY A
GOVERNMENT
STIFF... OR
SOMETHING
MORE...?

THESE QUESTIONS WILL FOLLOW
HER FOR THE WHOLE DAY.

NIGHTFALL.

THE PERFECT TIME
FOR DEAD HEROES
TO GO TO WORK.

TIME TO
GET SOME FAST
ANSWERS. THAT
THUG I TOOK OUT
LAST NIGHT KILLED
HIMSELF BEFORE I
COULD GET ANY
ANSWERS.

BET IT WON'T
TAKE ME LONG BE-
FORE I GET SOME
NEW ONES.

HE'S RIGHT. IT TAKES
ONLY THREE WELL-PLACED
APPEARANCES TO GET TO
THE FACTS:
WHO SENT OVERT-KILL?

A MAN
NICKNAMED
DRACULA.

NOW TO
PAY HIM
A LITTLE
VISIT.

IN A MIDTOWN BUILDING, PERCHED
AMID THE CONCRETE CATASTROPHES
OF NEW YORK CITY, SITS A SOMBER
FIGURE.

HE CONSIDERS HIS OPTIONS:
WHICH COMPANIES TO ENGULF;
WHAT TO WEAR TO THE CHARITY
FUNDRAISER; WHOSE WIFE
TO SEDUCE...

THESE PLANS ARE MADE
WITH NO FEAR OF
INTERRUPTION. NO ONE
HAS EVER PENETRATED
PAST THE SECOND LEVEL
OF THE RESIDENT TWELVE
TIER SECURITY SYSTEM.

NO ONE.

I NEED
YOUR HELP,
FAT BOY.

HOW DRAMATIC.

TELL YOUR
CYBORG FLUNKY
I'LL BE WAITING FOR
HIM AT THE EMERSON
PIERS.

MIDNIGHT.

TELL 'IM
WE'RE NOT
FINISHED,
YET.

WORD IS SENT.

THOUGH THIS ENCOUNTER WON'T
SOLVE ANY OF SPAWN'S PROBLEMS,
IT WILL SATISFY ONE DEEP NEED:

BATTLE.

SOMETIMES THERE
DOESN'T EVEN NEED TO
BE A REASON, THOUGH,
THIS TIME, HE HAS ONE...
A DEBT TO THE RESIDENTS
OF THE ALLEYWAYS.

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE
IT'S FOR HIMSELF
ALONE, A PURPOSE.
A WAY TO RESUME
HIS LIFE.

A REASON
FOR HOPE.

COCKY
SONOVA BITCH.

HEY
HERO!

SEEMS I
SCREWED UP!!
SHOULD HAVE
RIPPED YOUR
FRIGGIN' HEAD
OFF TO MAKE
SURE YOU WAS
DEAD!

I INTEND
TO CORRECT
MY OVERSIGHT.
THANKS FOR
THE INVITE.

SHALL
WE
PLAY?

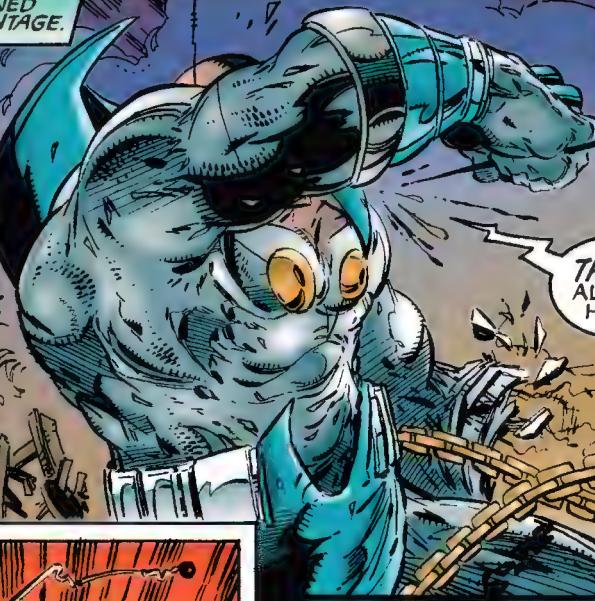


HE'S GAINED
AN ADVANTAGE.

NO REASON TO CELEBRATE
THOUGH. WOUNDING A MACHINE ONLY
LEAVES YOU WITH AN ANGRY MACHINE.

IT MUST BE TERMINATED.

THAT...
ALMOST
HURT.



BUD, YOU
WANT TO SEE
SCARRED?

I'LL SHOW YOU
HELL, IN THE
FLESH!

TAKE
A GOOD
LOOK.

I'M
PATIENT.

HA-HA-HA-HA!

YOU LOOK
LIKE
CRAP!

Y'KNOW,
THE SMELLY,
OOZY
KIND.

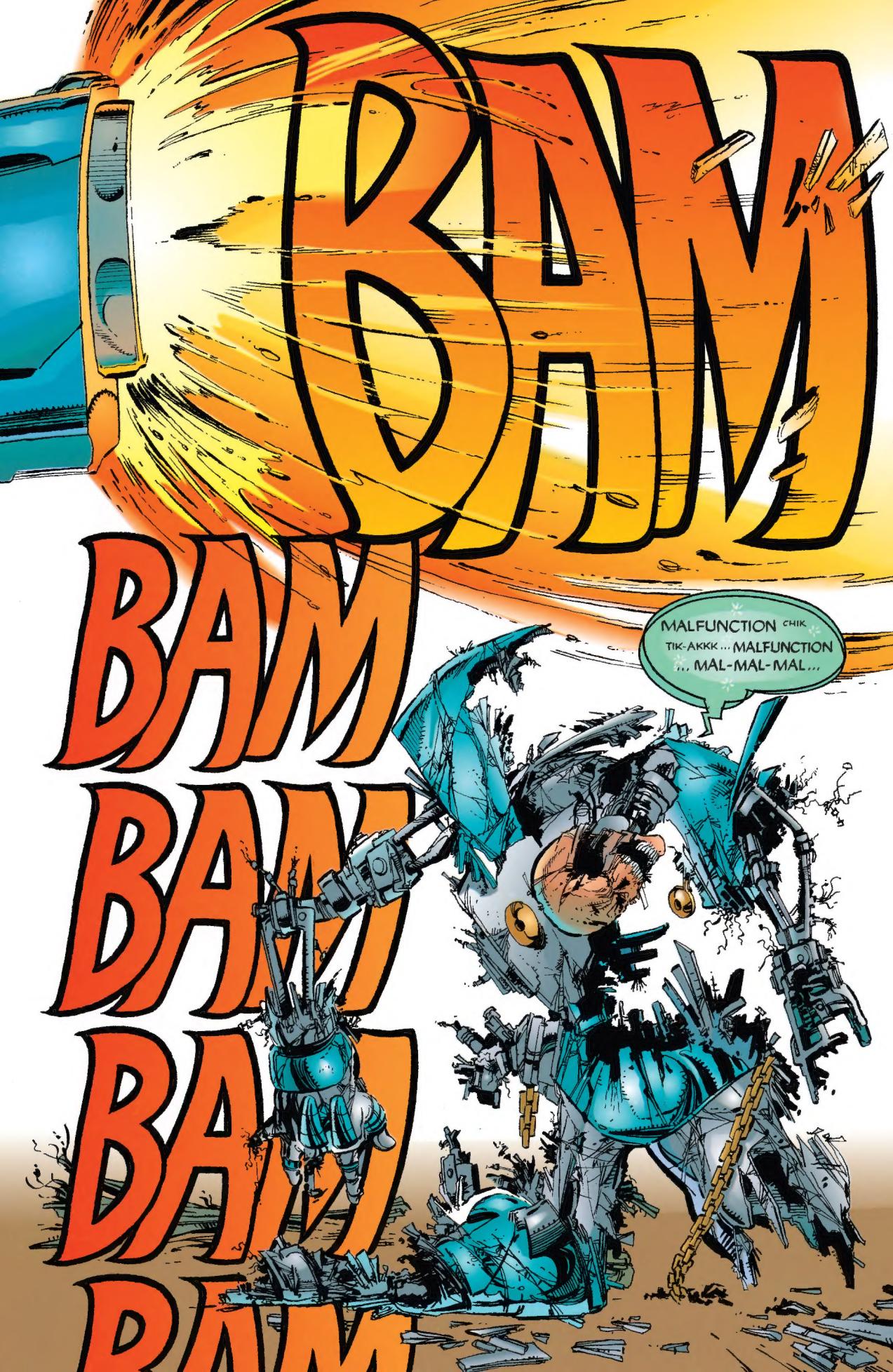
NOW I'M
GONNA
STOMP
YOU--

--SO I CAN
SCRAPE YOU
OFF MY BOOT--

--YOU
PIECE OF
TURD!



BAD
JOKE.



MALFUNCTION CHIK...
TIK-AKKK... MALFUNCTION...
... MAL-MAL-MAL...

SO WHO'S LAUGHING NOW?!!

I'VE FOUGHT YOUR KIND BEFORE. THIS IS WHERE THE FUN COMES IN.

S
UB
RO
G

KENK
POING!
SHKSX

WITH ALL THE NOISE THAT'S BEEN MADE, HE KNOWS THE AUTHORITIES WILL BE CALLED. HE NEEDS TO LEAVE.

BUT NOT BEFORE HE TAKES A MOMENT TO REVEL IN HIS HANDIWORK.

AND, NOT BEFORE HE SETS THE TIMER OF AN ELECTRO-MAGNETIC BOMB.

THAT SHOULD DO IT. CAN'T LEAVE ANY EVIDENCE BEHIND.

AS HE SLIPS AWAY INTO THE NIGHT, HE THINKS ABOUT HIS HOME IN THE ALLEY, AND HOW HE'LL CURL UP BEHIND SOME RUSTY DUMPSTER FOR A WELL-DESERVED NIGHT'S SLEEP.

A LONG, COMFORTABLE NIGHT.



EMPIRE

Tyrant
Lizard
King